

Registration Information

Those interested can register to take part in this formation on the Diocese of Cleveland Events Page at:

<https://www.dioceseofcleveland.org/events/2026/07/27/level-1-catechesis-of-the-good-shepherd-training--part-1>

Payment can be made by credit card at time of registration or any time prior to the start of the course by check made out to the Diocese of Cleveland.

Please contact Laura McBride at lmcbride@dioceseofcleveland.org or 216-696-6525 X2880 for questions or further information.

Formation Team

Maria Wood

Maria Wood is certified in Levels 1, 2, and 3 in CGS, holds a primary Montessori Credential from AMS, and is approved by the National Association of the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd as a formation leader for Level 1. She is the administrator/lead Montessori Guide at the Montessori School of University Heights, which includes a Level 1 atrium as an integral part of its Montessori program. Blessed to be married to Tim for 40 years before his death in 2022, Maria enjoys spending time with their two amazing sons, two lovely daughters-in-law, and two adorable grandsons.

Keri Cupp

Keri Cupp is certified in Levels 1, 2, and 3 of CGS. She has served as a CGS catechist since 2006 and is currently the coordinator of CGS at Church of the Gesu in University Heights, OH. She serves as a catechist in the Level 1 and 2 atria at Gesu. She is in the discernment process to become a CGS Formation Leader. Keri is a former labor and delivery nurse, has a wonderful husband, and three young adult children.

Special Note: The themes that comprise the presentations and adult reflections in Catechesis of the Good Shepherd (CGS) are based on more than 55 years of work with children by Sofia Cavalletti and Gianna Gobbi. Since CGS first began in the Roman Catholic tradition, it is presented in a course as it has been passed down from its co-founders in that Roman Catholic tradition. Since CGS also reflects the most essential proclamations of the Christian faith, a formation course in Catechesis of the Good Shepherd includes discussion, as needed, for making adaptations to other denominations.

For more information about The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd and formation visit www.cgsusa.org. For more local information contact lmcbride@dioceseofcleveland.org or 216-696-6525 ext. 2880

*Catechesis
of the
Good Shepherd
Faith Formation for
Children*



Level One Catechist Formation for Adults

Working with 3-6 year old children

Part 1

July 27 – August 1, 2026

9:00 am – 4:30 pm

Church of the Gesu

2470 Miramar Blvd.

University Hts., OH 44118

Part 2-Summer 2027 TBD

Hosted by

**Catholic Diocese of Cleveland
Office of Catechetical Formation**

What is the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd?

The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd offers a method of catechesis for children ages 3 through 12 through which children are helped in forming an authentic, faithful relationship with God. It seeks to create and facilitate a sacred, hands-on environment for children called the *atrium*. It is in the atrium where the children and the adults (catechists) celebrate the most essential mysteries of the Catholic Christian faith. CGS is rooted in the Sacred Scripture and Liturgy. It began in Rome in 1954 by Dr. Sophia Cavalletti and Gianna Gobbi, and is now worldwide.

The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd is grounded in scriptural and liturgical study framed by Montessori's principles of education and understanding of the developmental needs of children. This method of catechesis began in Rome, Italy in 1954 with Sofia Cavalletti, a biblical scholar, and her colleague, Gianna Gobbi, a Montessori trained educator. Both women were Roman Catholic. In their observation and engagement with children, **they sought to discover what face of God children most need to see in order to grow in their knowledge and love of God.** Children need the sensitive guidance of the adult and the inner guidance of the Holy Spirit to nurture this relationship.

If we want to help the child draw nearer to God, we should with patience and courage, seek to go always closer to the vital nucleus of things. This requires study and prayer. The children will be our teachers if we know how to observe them. -Sofia Cavalletti

The adult prepares a sacred space, called the atrium, which allows children a prayerful place to listen to and respond to God through Jesus, the Good Shepherd. The atrium is also a place of celebration and community - to be with God, enjoy Him, listen to His Word, and to share this

experience with others. It is designed to reflect the beauty of His creation and God's abiding love. It is also a place to begin to recognize the signs and symbols that speak of Him through the liturgies of Baptism and Eucharist.

❧ Level I Catechist Formation ❧

Level I catechist formation is foundational for all three levels of the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd. The primary focus is preparation to serve three-to six-year-old children. The objectives of Level I catechist formation are:

- ❖ To present the guiding principles of the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd.
- ❖ To explore the vital religious needs and capacities of the 3–6-year-old child.
- ❖ To offer the adult time to prayerfully reflect and personally consider the Biblical and liturgical themes presented to the 3–6-year-old child.
- ❖ To broaden the adult's ability to observe and learn from children's spirituality.
- ❖ To cultivate the capacity to deeply listen to and enjoy with children the Word of God.
- ❖ To offer guidelines and assistance in preparing the atrium, writing the catechist's album, and making materials.

❧ Your Invitation ❧

You are invited to participate in this Level I catechist formation preparing you as a catechist to serve children ages three to six years old.

**Level I Part 1 Formation dates:
Monday to Saturday July 27 to August 1 2026
at Church of the Gesu in University Hts., Ohio
(2470 Miramar Blvd | 44118)**

Part 2: Dates for summer 2027 are TBD

This course is designed to include spiritual formation for adults as well as instruction in this method of catechesis in order to serve the religious life of young children. The pace of the course is retreat-like, allowing for its contemplative nature to be a prayerful experience for adults and a model for the children's atrium experience. A three-year cycle of presentations is offered from scripture and liturgy as given to children. Adults will also receive background information on the themes that undergird this approach including a foundational study into Maria Montessori's work with children. Catechist formation includes seeing all the presentations as given to three- to six-year-old, reading the core CGS texts, writing album pages for the presentations, and making a few of the materials used in the atrium. Successful participation of this course will result in a certificate from the United States Association of The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd. Partial Scholarships are available through the Diocese of Cleveland's Office of Catechetical Formation.

Tuition is \$535.00 for the entire course.

Tuition for participants from the Diocese of Cleveland is \$300. Payment is due by July 27, 2026.

Required Materials

Level 1 required reading - *The Religious Potential of the Child, 3rd ed.*; *The Good Shepherd and the Child: A Joyful Journey*; and *Nurturing the Whole Child: Montessori Principles Applied to the Catechesis of Children*. These may be purchased at www.cgsusa.org.

Membership to the United States Association of The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd, www.cgsusa.org, is highly recommended for each participant and will allow access to the Level I Materials Manual.